

NEWSRELEASE

Department of Corrections • 1539 11th Avenue • Helena, Montana 59620 • 444-3930 • Fax: 444-4920

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Contacts: Sally Hilander, Victim Information Specialist (406) 444-7461

Mike Ferriter, Interstate Compact Administrator (406) 444-4913

Montana victim activist honored nationally

Crime victim rights activist Anita Richards of Seeley Lake has been selected by the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision (ICAOS) to receive the 2005 Peyton Tuthill Award for outstanding support of victim service programs.

Mrs. Richards, whose son was murdered in 1992, represents victims on Montana's Interstate Compact Council. Interstate Compact rules govern felony offenders approved for transfer from the corrections system in one state to another.

"Anita's efforts are not limited to her role on Montana's Interstate Compact Council. Her efforts are far-reaching and truly consistent with the goals of the new compact," noted Mike Ferriter, Montana's Interstate Compact Administrator. "I am confident that the Tuthill family will agree that her tireless efforts and passion for change are in harmony with the intent of this award." Ferriter nominated Mrs. Richards for the award.

Mrs. Richards co-chairs the Department of Corrections Crime Victims Advisory Council and is a member of its Policy Task Force. She also is a facilitator for the Department's new Victim-Offender Dialogue Program. In 1997, she co-founded a victim impact speakers' panel at Treasure State Correctional Training Center (boot camp) in Deer Lodge. Mrs. Richards is a victim consultant for the Flathead County Restorative Justice Council, a mediator for Montana's justice courts, and a member of the Montana Sentencing Commission.

In 1992, Anita and Ron Richards' son, Jim, was murdered by his wife, Becky Lynn Richards, who is serving a life sentence at Montana Women's Prison for deliberate homicide and related felony offenses.

The national award honors the memory of Peyton Tuthill, whose brutal rape and murder prompted a rewriting of Interstate Compact rules. An Interstate Compact inmate from Colorado was released from a Maryland prison without notification and broke into the Ms. Tuthill's home. Colorado officials said they were not obligated to give notification because the offender, Donta Page, wasn't a parolee. The new Interstate Compact, passed in 2004, closes these types of loopholes and standardizes compact rules among member states.

Mrs. Richards has been invited to accept the award September 14 during the ICAOS Annual Meeting in Phoenix, Arizona.